

IN THE ABSTRACT:

After the claims, please insert the attached single page containing the abstract.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

A2 4. (Amended) A chimeric DNA construct according to claim 1, wherein said plant-specific sequence codes for at least a DNA-binding domain of a plant transcription factor.

6. (Amended) A chimeric DNA construct according to claim 1, wherein said plant-specific sequence activates transcription by interacting with a DNA-binding protein.

A3 7. (Amended) A chimeric DNA construct according to claim 1, further comprising a sequence that encodes at least the hormone-binding domain of a steroid hormone receptor, said sequence being in frame with the fusion construct consisting of at least one repressor sequence in transcriptional fusion with at least one plant-specific sequence that codes for a protein or fragment thereof that activates transcription either by binding to DNA itself or by interacting with a DNA-binding protein; whereby the nuclear localization of the chimeric protein, that is the product of the translation of said fusion construct is dependent on the application of said steroid hormone or analogues thereof.

A4 9. (Amended) A chimeric DNA construct according to claim 1, wherein the elements allowing the transcription of said repressor sequence comprise a constitutive promoter.

10. (Amended) A host cell transformed with a DNA construct according to claim 1.

11. (Amended) A transgenic plant or parts thereof, said plant being transformed with a DNA construct according to claim 1, or deriving from said plant.

12. (Amended) A method of obtaining a transgenic plant, wherein a DNA construct according to claim 1 is transferred and expressed in a plant cell and said cell is cultured under conditions for regenerating a whole transgenic plant.

13. (Amended) Use of a chimeric DNA construct according to claim 1 for inhibiting the expression of a target gene in the genome of a plant.

14. (Amended) A method for determining the function of a transcription factor in plants, comprising the steps of:

- i) fusing a sequence encoding said transcription factor to a repressor sequence to form a DNA construct as defined in claim 4;
- ii) transforming plant cells with said DNA construct;
- iii) culturing the plants obtained from the transformed cells and observing a phenocopy of a mutation correlated with the loss of expression of genes controlled by said transcription factor.

15. (Amended) A method for identifying new genes in plants, comprising the steps of:

- i) obtaining transgenic plants transformed with a chimeric DNA construct according to claim 1;
- ii) comparing the RNA population from said transgenic plants with the RNA population of a plant that has not been transformed with said chimeric DNA construct, by amplifying the RNAs repressed by expression of the chimeric DNA

construct, identified as genes inactive in said transgenic plants obtained in step i) but active in the plant that has not been transformed with a chimeric DNA construct.

16. (Amended) A method for identifying new genes in plants, comprising the steps of:

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i) obtaining transgenic plants transformed with a chimeric DNA construct according to claim 7, comprising a sequence that encodes at least the hormone-binding domain of a steroid hormone receptor;

ii) submitting said transgenic plants to an induction by means of a steroid hormone or analogues thereof, whereby a phenocopy is created due the loss of expression of target genes;

iii) comparing the RNA populations from said transgenic plants before and shortly after induction, by amplifying the RNAs repressed by expression of the chimeric DNA construct, identified as genes active before but inactive after induction.

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